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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/47/38, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/340, 368, 377, 391, 508 and 564)

1. Mr. OULD MOHAMED LEMINE (Mauritania) recalled that the United Nations had, since its establishment, recognized the importance of the role of women and had in its Charter affirmed the equal rights of men and women. All the international human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations also emphasized the equality of the sexes. Thanks to the many activities undertaken by the Organization and the untiring efforts by those of its bodies dealing with the status of women, there was a heightened awareness of the issue worldwide. It was now unanimously recognized that it was imperative to ensure the participation of women in all spheres of life. There was a debate only about the best ways of hastening the implementation of the various strategies devised to benefit women.

2. The main obstacle to the emancipation of women was, without question, their lack of education and training. It was clear that society as a whole could only gain by educating women because, through each woman, a family was being educated, and new energies were being released to do battle for economic and social development.

3. The status of women in the developing countries had greatly deteriorated in recent years because of the economic recession, the growing debt burden and the reduction of social expenditure as a consequence of the structural adjustment programmes that had been instituted. In countries like Mauritania, where women had always enjoyed the same rights as men, women often found themselves, as a result of social upheavals, in the position of being heads of household at a time when the means of subsistence were growing scarce. The international community had a duty to pay serious attention to the condition of hundreds of millions of women who were in that situation and to act before they gave way to despair.

4. According to the available statistics, women represented one third of the workforce, but this percentage was misleading because often the official data did not take into account the informal sector. Still, the fact that women accounted for more than half the production of foodstuffs, as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) indicated, was proof that women were already at the heart of the process of development. To invest in women was not only to make reparation for an injustice; it was to act in a way that could only benefit the economy as a whole.

5. In Mauritania, the Government was convinced that no development effort could succeed without the full participation of all women. A ministerial department responsible for the status of women, whose director was a woman, applied the Government's policy for the emancipation of women, while an interministerial technical committee was responsible for monitoring activities for the advancement of women. The goals to be achieved were the following:

(Mr. Ould Mohamed Lemine, Mauritania)

to promote the education and training of women; to encourage them to participate in social and economic activities; to ensure the legal and social protection of women; to set up support structures for women at all levels; and to improve the living conditions of women, especially in rural areas.

6. Mauritanian women currently participated in all sectors of the life of the country. Women's cooperatives were springing up everywhere and there were particularly large numbers of women in the teaching field. Lastly, a code regulating family life on a stable basis was currently under study.

7. Yet it was at the global level that action had to be taken to remove the obstacles that stood in the way of hundreds of millions of women throughout the world. That was the challenge that the fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 would have to face.

8. Ms. FROGN SELLAEG (Norway), speaking on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden as well as her own country, said that the Nordic countries viewed the fourth World Conference on Women as an opportunity for all Member States to demonstrate their political will to re-establish the advancement of women as a global priority. The Nordic countries attached great importance to the full involvement of non-governmental organizations in the preparations for the Conference and welcomed the offer made by the host Government to all interested non-governmental organizations and individuals to attend the NGO Forum which would take place in Beijing before and during the Conference. Non-governmental organizations in the Nordic countries had high expectations for the 1995 Conference and many had begun their preparations. In 1994, a Nordic Forum, in which women from the Baltic countries would participate, would be held in Finland.

9. The preparations for the Conference were as important as the Conference itself. The Nordic countries hoped that the Secretary-General would soon appoint a woman with international stature in relation to the advancement of women and with experience of the United Nations system, to be the Secretary-General for the Conference, in accordance with resolution 36/8 A of the Commission on the Status of Women.

10. The Nordic countries were strong believers in international cooperation for the empowerment of women worldwide. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was central in that regard. Although 119 States had already ratified or acceded to the Convention, the many reservations accompanying the ratifications undermined its very foundations. The Nordic countries urged the States which had formulated reservations to consider withdrawing them.

11. Given the growing number of States parties to the Convention, the Nordic countries believed that the session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) should be extended so that it could make

(Ms. Frogn Sellaeg, Norway)

up the backlog in its consideration of the reports of States parties. Lastly, the Nordic delegations supported the steps taken by the Commission on the Status of Women to strengthen its activities and they would continue to contribute to the improvement of existing mechanisms.

12. At the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights an attempt must be made to stop considering women's rights as separate from human rights. The Nordic countries believed that human rights applied equally to men and women, and did so in all fields.

13. Women must participate in decision-making at all levels, and the United Nations had a key role to play in their empowerment. It was more urgent than ever that women should influence decisions concerning the future of humanity being taken at the international level. Therefore, the issue of gender disparity should be considered by the various United Nations bodies and, in particular, should receive special attention from the Economic and Social Council in 1993.

14. The development of effective measures to combat violence against women in all its forms was an absolute necessity, since it impeded the enjoyment of their fundamental rights.

15. At a time when the whole world faced an economic crisis, the structural adjustment that the crisis imposed on countries could only be effective, as recognized in the report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with the participation of women. The Nordic countries emphasized the importance of educating girls and women, clearly recognized by the World Bank. Educating women reduced the number of births and maternal and child mortality, and helped to prevent the spread of AIDS. The Nordic countries strongly supported the views of the World Bank on that issue.

16. Sustainable economic growth and improvement in the quality of life, especially in developing countries, were goals that could only be achieved with the participation of women at all levels. An entire chapter of Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio was devoted to the participation of women in promoting sustainable development. The Nordic countries believed that the General Assembly should examine ways of enhancing the participation of women in the Conference follow-up.

17. Peace was one of the themes of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995. As the number of United Nations peace-keeping operations increased, Member States should consider increasing the number of women participating in such operations, currently still quite small.

18. Finally, the Nordic countries noted with concern that efforts to achieve the goals set by the General Assembly regarding the number of women in the United Nations Secretariat were proceeding very slowly. They attached great

(Ms. Frogn Sellaeg, Norway)

importance to that issue, especially the need to increase the number of women at the higher levels, and they hoped that the Secretariat was taking action in that regard.

19. Although the Nordic countries had achieved the highest percentage of women in government, nevertheless, they felt it necessary to strengthen their efforts to increase women's participation in decision-making, especially in economic areas, where there were still few women.

20. Mr. RAHMAN (Pakistan) recalled that the United Nations Charter, which affirmed equal rights of men and women, had been adopted at a time when only 31 countries gave women the right to vote. Since then, the international community had undertaken numerous activities which had helped to improve the status of women at every level and to focus attention on their living conditions and their contribution to development. Women could no longer be marginalized in development and the political process. The movement for the advancement of women was not new. Examples could be found in Greek classics: Plato, in his Republic, had already recommended the abolition of social roles based on sex. In more recent times, the English philosopher John Stuart Mill and the Norwegian playwright Ibsen had made a case for the emancipation of women.

21. Currently, poverty and illiteracy mainly affected women, especially in developing countries. Paradoxically, women contributed between 50 and 80 per cent of food production and ran close to 70 per cent of small enterprises. In many cases, women's work remained invisible because it was not included in national accounting. Inadequate data no doubt explained flawed policies.

22. It was essential to create socio-economic conditions conducive to the greater participation of women in economic decision-making. They must be guaranteed equal employment opportunities, and services must be developed to reduce women's child-care responsibilities. Training programmes specifically for women living in extreme poverty must be created, and their paid and unpaid work must be included in national accounting statistics.

23. The participation of women in political life was extremely low worldwide, since, according to statistics, there were barely 10 per cent of women in national parliaments and only 3.5 per cent at the ministerial level. A very large number of countries had no women ministers. In 1988, the General Assembly had called on Member States to establish specific targets to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. In 1990, the Commission on the Status of Women had urged the participation of women in politics at the highest level. His delegation looked forward to the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, which would consider the first draft of the Platform for Action to be submitted by the Secretary-General for the fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in China in 1995.

(Mr. Rahman, Pakistan)

24. Investing in women would not resolve all the problems related to development but it would make a contribution. Literacy among women equalled educating mothers and resulted in an investment in the future of mankind. Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment Development recognized, in its Principle 20, that women had a vital role in environmental management and development. That was particularly true in developing countries, where women were the first to be affected by environmental degradation.

25. In Pakistan, the Government considered the integration of women into national development imperative. A ministry had been established for that purpose which undertook programmes for the advancement of women in many sectors. The Government had also established a bank managed exclusively by women for the purpose of creating jobs for women. In the civil service, 5 per cent of posts had been set aside for women, who could also apply for other positions.

26. The Pakistani Commission on the Status Women had been created in 1984 to determine the rights and responsibilities of women in Islamic society and to make recommendations with the aim of meeting their needs in the fields of education, health and employment opportunities; to identify services which women could render to society; and to suggest measures to integrate women from minority communities into national life.

27. Lastly, the Government of Pakistan, fully cognizant of the important role played by non-governmental organizations in the advancement of women, provided financial support for NGOs and commended them for their work.

28. Mr. GOSHU (Ethiopia) said that there had been no significant breakthrough as far as changes in the role of women were concerned. A few isolated electoral victories or appointments of women to positions of leadership were not sufficient to change the status quo, which was generally male-dominated.

29. After describing the living conditions of Ethiopian women - who represented 50 per cent of the population of Ethiopia - he enumerated the wide array of responsibilities borne by Ethiopian women, which required them to work, on average, 16 hours a day. Women had only limited access to education, health care and employment. They were at once responsible for the survival and the well-being of children and families, and therefore were particularly affected by environmental degradation, food shortages, poor hygiene and limited access to family planning services. Because of those conditions, it was impossible for them to participate in social development tasks or even to obtain the most basic education; that prevented them from attaining administrative and managerial positions in the public and private sectors.

30. Only recently had efforts been made to create the organizational machinery to address women's concerns. For example, a women's unit had been created in the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct development programmes for

(Mr. Goshu, Ethiopia)

rural women. Its focus was mainly on income-generating activities and on providing women with appropriate technologies to lessen their burdens at home and on the farm. For its part, the Ethiopian Nutrition Institute had launched a training programme for women in the areas of nutrition science and the feeding of children.

31. The Centre for Research, Training and Information for Women in Development established recently under the auspices of Addis Ababa University was conducting research on issues regarding women; collecting data on the participation of women in development, and disseminating ideas and information to assist the Government in the formulation of policies for women.

32. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had also been carrying out a number of programmes for women, but a lack of both strategies and well-defined priorities had significantly undermined coordination, leading to duplication of efforts.

33. A national plan of action for women and children for the period 1990 to 2000 was being prepared. It aimed to provide basic social services, primary health care, access to education, water supplies and sanitation, with the goal of creating the conditions in which the lives of women could be improved. In addition, the Ethiopian Government had been taking steps to ensure that women were able to take their proper place in national life; there was already a significant representation of women in the highest echelons of the State as well as in ambassadorial roles. Lastly, the Ethiopian Government was prepared to participate fully and actively in the World Conference on Women, which was to take place in Beijing in 1995, as well as the World Conference on Human Rights scheduled for 1993, where women's issues were expected to figure prominently.

34. Miss BURLACU (Romania) said that the high-priority themes of the Commission on the Status of Women were also topics of high priority for her country. Romania had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1982, and in 1990 had withdrawn the reservation which it had formulated concerning article 29, paragraph 1, on the settlement of any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention.

35. The Romanian legal system provided women with the means to participate in all of the country's recently created democratic institutions. The new Romanian constitution, which had entered into force on 8 December 1991, guaranteed equal rights for all citizens including the exercise of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights by all citizens without discrimination. In addition, the Family Code, Labour Code and other legal instruments which had been amended after December 1989 included provisions specifically protecting the rights of women.

(Miss Burlacu, Romania)

36. Of course, in practice, many problems remained to be solved. However, women were in the majority - and had even reached high levels of qualification - in activities related to health (75 per cent), education (69 per cent), justice (46 per cent), and business, including new private enterprises owned or managed by women (65 per cent). Nevertheless, women should participate even more in decision making and it was to be hoped that they would be better represented in the new government that was about to be formed.

37. Since one of the obstacles to eliminating de facto discrimination against women was that most women and men were not aware of women's legal rights or did not fully understand the legal and administrative measures by which those rights could be exercised, several Romanian non-governmental organizations were active in making those systems known. That was why Romania supported the idea that eradication of poverty was a precondition for the creation of conditions of true liberty, democracy and equality.

38. In that connection, there was no escaping the fact that, while the market economy could provide new opportunities, it could also maintain or even exacerbate existing inequalities, or even create new ones. As a country in transition, Romania was facing unemployment, which particularly affected women. That was why it was important for social policies to ensure the participation of women in all economic, social and political activities.

39. Romania welcomed Agenda 21, which acknowledged the role of women in environmental management as well as the contribution women could make to averting the threat to the planet of environmental degradation.

40. In other respects, it was clear that existing structures and mechanisms made no provision for proper articulation of women's views on global issues. In that regard, the importance of women's participation in such areas as the peace process and bilateral and multilateral negotiations, disarmament and international cooperation was insufficiently recognized.

41. Her delegation hoped that the forthcoming World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September 1995 on the theme: "Action for Equality, Development and Peace" would present an opportunity for the United Nations to impart new momentum to actions for the advancement of women at national, regional and international levels.

42. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand) speaking on behalf of the Governments of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that on the issue of the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the Charter was very clear: "The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs". The credibility of the Organization was at stake.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

43. Yet significant underrepresentation of women in the Secretariat continued. The three Governments on whose behalf he was speaking had consistently urged the United Nations to rectify that deplorable situation so that it could properly reflect in its own composition the principles of equal opportunity it sought to promote globally.

44. With regard to the targets to be achieved by 1995, of an overall participation rate of 35 per cent of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, and a participation rate of 25 per cent of women in posts at the D-1 level and above, it must be recognized that, while there had been some increase in the number of women at the lower Professional levels, the increase was far from sufficient for the achievement by 1995 of an overall participation rate of 35 per cent. Between June 1991 and June 1992, the percentage of women in the Secretariat in posts subject to geographical distribution had risen by just 1.4 percentage points, from 29.2 to 30.6 per cent. To reach the 35 per cent target by 1995, the United Nations would require an annual increase of around twice the present rate of women occupying posts in that category. In addition, women were practically unrepresented in the most senior echelons. While the total number of women in posts at the D-1 level had increased, although only marginally, there had been no increase in the number of women at the D-2 level over the previous year; moreover, there were no women Under-Secretaries-General, and the one woman Assistant Secretary-General was scheduled to leave her post by March 1993. If the 25 per cent target for women in the higher echelons in the Secretariat was to be reached by 1995, an annual rate of increase of around 7.3 per cent was urgently required.

45. Clearly, the initiative in recruiting women into the Secretariat from underrepresented countries must, in the last analysis, be taken by Member States, which must ensure that women were considered for vacancies. But the Organization must take additional measures to eliminate obstacles to the advancement of women within the Secretariat. It was disappointing to note, as the Canadian consultant had done in the report she had been asked to prepare on the issue, that many of the obstacles identified in 1985 had still not been eliminated. It was the Secretary-General's responsibility to use his authority to take action to make all staff aware of the problem of sexual equality. One particularly pernicious form of sex-based discrimination was sexual harassment, which was faced by women the world over but which must be completely banished from the United Nations and its Secretariat, lest it tarnish their image. The United Nations must take swift action to deal firmly with cases of sexual harassment by all persons employed in the United Nations system in any capacity, and the Secretary-General must make the procedures widely known.

46. The Australian, Canadian and New Zealand delegations welcomed the Action Programme contained in the Secretary-General's report, which, appropriately, focused on coordination of recruitment, placement and promotion, the accountability of managers for achieving targets, and career development.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

They also expected clear and constant indications from the Secretariat that the advancement of women remained of the highest priority for the Organization.

47. The Secretary-General must also ensure that the current reform of the United Nations did not work to the detriment of women, as seemed to be the case. The establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development provided another opportunity for the Secretary-General to address seriously the gender imbalance in the Secretariat. The three delegations for which he was speaking had in past years urged the United Nations to create an equal employment opportunities unit, outside the Office of Human Resources Management, with the capacity to exercise authority over all personnel decisions. The Secretary-General should establish such a unit, mention of which had been omitted from his report.

48. The report contained some encouraging elements, in particular the fact that there had been a slight increase in the level of recruitment and promotion of women in the Secretariat. Much more was required, however, if the United Nations was to set an example to the international community on issues relating to the rights of women. That example must come from the top of the Secretariat. Only then would it be possible to achieve the targets set by the General Assembly.

49. Mrs. SUVARNATEMEE (Thailand) said that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a milestone in the quest to promote equal rights between men and women. Her delegation urged the many countries which had not yet acceded to the Convention to do so. For its part, Thailand had acceded to the Convention in 1985 with seven reservations. In 1991 the Thai Government had withdrawn two of those reservations, namely those relating to article 11, paragraph 1 (b), on the right to the same employment opportunities, and article 15, paragraph 3, on the nullification of contracts restricting the legal capacity of women. The Government had in 1992 decided to withdraw its reservation relating to article 9, paragraph 2, on the right of nationality. The Thai law of nationality had also been amended to allow children born of Thai women to acquire Thai nationality on the basis of equality between men and women.

50. Like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies sought the advancement of women in society. However, during the past few years, it seemed as though the implementation of the Strategies had slackened and, in 1990, the first review of their implementation by the Commission on the Status of Women had made it clear that numerous obstacles to the advancement of women still existed. It was therefore crucial that all concerned should redouble their efforts at all levels in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategies. In that context, the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 would provide a good opportunity to review the progress made and would help in the formulation of clear and specific guidelines. Thailand was prepared to participate actively in the entire preparatory process for the World

(Mrs. Suvarnatemee, Thailand)

Conference and also in the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Conference on Women and Development, to be held in Indonesia in 1994.

51. Recognizing the need to integrate questions relating to women into national development plans, Thailand had established a National Commission on Women's Affairs, which had been extremely active. The Commission had drawn up a long-term plan for the advancement of women. It had incorporated its planned activities into the seventh Five-Year National Economic and Social Development Plan for the period 1992-1997. In addition, taking advantage of the Government's proclamation of 1992 as Thai Women's Year, the Commission had revised many laws, rules and regulations. It had also recently organized, within the framework of its campaign to involve women in political life and to promote their rights in that regard, a two-day seminar for 800 female district chiefs and village heads. The Commission was also currently preparing a translation of the publications entitled The World's Women 1970-1990 and Women: Challenges to the Year 2000, which it would disseminate to all women throughout the country.

52. The advancement of women owed much to the United Nations and other international organizations and agencies. In that connection, her delegation wished to pay tribute to UNIFEM, which had always acted as an advocate for the cause of women and promoted their role in the developing countries, and to such other bodies as the Commission on the Status of Women, INSTRAW, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, WFP and FAO, which were jointly endeavouring to enhance the status of women in their technical cooperation activities.

53. Mr. KASOULIDES (Cyprus) said that discrimination against women was still prevalent throughout the world, even in the most economically developed countries. He urged all States that had not yet done so to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was a major legal instrument in that area.

54. His delegation was pleased to note that efforts had been made to coordinate follow-up activities in implementing the Convention with those relating to other instruments concerning human rights, in order to avoid duplication and overlapping. It would be helpful to adopt a single procedure for reporting on the implementation of those instruments at the national level, since that would simplify the task of small States which found it increasingly difficult to abide by their contractual obligations.

55. As could be seen from the Secretary-General's report in document A/47/508 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/14, the status of women in the Secretariat remained a matter of concern. The United Nations should set an example and redouble its efforts to implement the relevant resolutions. His delegation regretted that the organization of briefings for the regional groups, which had been decided upon the previous year, had still not been institutionalized, since such briefings would enhance public awareness of the issue and would help to speed up the attainment of the targets.

(Mr. Kasoulides, Cyprus)

56. With regard to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report (A/37/377) and, in particular, the efforts made to find solutions to the problem of violence against women in all its forms and to strengthen the assistance given to women who were the victims of violence. It looked forward to the report of the Working Group of the Commission on the Status of Women, which was to contain a draft declaration on violence against women, and it hoped that the draft declaration would be approved at the next session of the Commission and adopted by the General Assembly in 1993.

57. Referring to the instruments relating to women's rights, he said that Cyprus had ratified not only the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but also a number of international instruments which included provisions concerning the equality of rights of men and women, such as the European Social Charter, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

58. The struggle to ensure that women enjoyed the same rights as men and were able to participate fully in decision-making at all levels had been marked by some progress in recent years. That progress, which had been slow but steady, was due to the fact that the issue of discrimination against women was dealt with more openly and that all its aspects were debated in public. Against that background, his delegation welcomed the convening of a World Conference on Women in 1995. In that connection, his delegation noted that the preparatory meetings for the Conference should serve not only to prepare for the Conference itself, but also to encourage the implementation of measures already adopted and to continue to identify various facets of discrimination against women. In addition, Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/20 should be implemented: in that resolution the Council had requested the Commission on the Status of Women to establish, during its thirty-seventh session, an open-ended working group to consider the Commission's contribution to the World Conference. His delegation considered that the success of the Conference would depend on the active participation of women's non-governmental organizations at all stages of the preparation and holding of the Conference, and it accordingly welcomed the adoption by the Commission on the Status of Women of its resolution 36/8, in which it recommended that NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council should be allowed unrestricted access to participate in the World Conference.

59. For historical reasons, Cyprus had always attached great importance to complete equality between men and women. In that connection, he recalled that, since its foundation in 1960, the Republic of Cyprus had achieved rapid modernization by relying on the resourcefulness of all its citizens and that, in addition, Cypriot women had set an example during the tragic events which had led to the partition of the country. In particular, he drew attention to the case of the displaced women who had kept their families together and who had worked in industry, the services and agriculture and had organized peace

(Mr. Kasoulides, Cyprus)

marches along the green line, thus demonstrating that the future of Cyprus lay in the reconciliation and peaceful coexistence of the two Cypriot communities, without external interference.

60. In conclusion, he said that the Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 36/8, had requested that priority be given to the situation of rural women. Cyprus had organized a number of seminars and meetings on that issue. In addition, legislation had been prepared on such matters as equal pay for men and women, social security, the legal status of children born out of wedlock and day-care for the children of working mothers.

61. Mr. SOH (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation welcomed the increase in the number of States acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which the Republic of Korea had ratified in 1984. His delegation hoped that the question of women would receive the attention it deserved at the World Conference on Human Rights and that the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women would provide an opportunity to enhance the awareness of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of women's issues. In that connection, his delegation supported the decision by the Commission on the Status of Women to incorporate the preparations for the Conference into its regular work programme. It would also be desirable if non-governmental organizations were to contribute to the preparatory phase of the Conference in order to ensure the success of the NGO Forum to be held at the same time. His delegation considered that the duration of the annual session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be extended to three weeks, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/17.

62. General recommendation 19, in the report of the Committee (A/47/38), represented a promising step forward in that it detailed the measures necessary to combat violence against women. It was to be hoped that the draft declaration on violence against women, which precisely defined that form of violence, would receive ample consideration during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

63. The Republic of Korea had adopted various measures to protect women, such as the provision of shelters for battered women or the mandatory establishment of consultation services for women at workplaces with over 100 female workers. The Government had endeavoured to eliminate gender discrimination present in earlier legal instruments. The legal status of married women had been reviewed; in case of divorce, women could now claim a share of the couple's property, based on their non-financial contribution to the household, and they could obtain custody of the children on an equal footing with husbands, to whom custody had previously been automatically awarded. The Equal Employment Act, which provided legal guarantees for the right of women to work and protection for pregnant women, had been strengthened. However, as the report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Promotion of Women to the Year 2000 (A/47/377) emphasized de jure equality

(Mr. Soh, Republic of Korea)

was but a first step towards de facto equality. Women needed to be cognizant of the rights and remedies available to them. Women's organizations could play an instrumental role in that regard, particularly in rural and remote areas.

64. His delegation was pleased to see that poverty reduction and women's role in that process was one of the priority themes for the forthcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Accordingly, the Government of the Republic of Korea had supported resolutions 36/3 and 36/5 of the Commission. The first of them underlined the fact that without women's full participation in every sector of society true democracy was impossible. The second urged Governments to draw up development programmes which took greater account of the capacities of women.

65. Since 1987, the five-year socio-economic development plan had contained a separate section on women. The development plan for 1992-1996 placed special emphasis on education, employment and the welfare of women. It aimed at eliminating discriminatory aspects of school curricula that affected girls, to development vocational training for women, especially in the sphere of advanced technology, and establishing new child-care services as well as a women's welfare service delivery system. As national efforts could not suffice, his delegation appreciated the efforts of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) which, by voicing the concerns and needs of women and by endeavouring to establish a link between women at the micro-level and macro-policy-making, had permitted women to make themselves heard. In May 1992, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had participated in organizing, in Seoul, a workshop which had focused particularly on the importance of women's contribution to the informal sector.

66. Within the Secretariat of the United Nations itself, efforts should be continued to achieve the target of 35 per cent of women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 1995. The Organization should also endeavour to transform the attitudes and values of society, as they frequently constituted obstacles to reducing inequality between men and women.

67. Mrs. SILVA (Chile) said that since it had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1989, Chile had based its action for the advancement of women on the principles set out in the Convention. Accordingly, the democratic Government had established the National Women's Service (SERNAM) whose task was to ensure that the needs of women were taken into account in Government policies and plans. The Service had implemented projects and programmes designed to promote the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, as well as plans to assist low-income women, to prevent violence in families and to develop education, especially in low-income sectors, particularly with a view to reducing pregnancies among adolescents. Simultaneously, the National Women s Service had analysed Government policies towards women, especially with regard to hygiene at work,

(Mrs. Silva, Chile)

housing and employment; it had also disseminated written and audiovisual material to promote awareness of women's problems. In the legal sphere, reforms had been proposed in respect of labour law and civil and criminal law. In addition, an information and dissemination centre for women's rights had been set up in order to help to familiarize them with their legally recognized rights.

68. Although Chile was endeavouring to eliminate discrimination against women, there were still numerous obstacles; in order to overcome them, measures to promote equality of opportunity would have to be adopted. Although legal measures had been taken to ensure the equality of women before the law, de facto discrimination persisted. In view of that situation, Chile fully supported the principles set out in the report of the Secretary-General considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-sixth session, regarding the legitimacy, as recognized by article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, of adopting special measures on behalf of women in order to eliminate de jure and de facto discrimination affecting them. In that connection, it was vital to set in motion machinery to provide information on and disseminate the rights of women, and to organize introductory campaigns to elementary legal concepts.

69. Her delegation believed that the recommendations and conclusions made by the Commission on the Status of Women, whose task was to oversee the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, constituted an essential document in so far as they proposed measures to be taken by Governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as United Nations bodies.

70. In conformity with those recommendations, Chile undertook to speed up the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Thus, with regard to equality, it was essential to eliminate de jure and de facto discrimination against women and to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. With regard to development, Chile was aware that the advancement of women and development went hand in hand and that it was consequently the participation of women in development must be strengthened by giving priority to women living in extreme poverty. Lastly, with regard to peace, Chile was convinced that, just like men, women should contribute to peace, which implied their participation in decisions concerning conflicts, be they international, regional or national.

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(b) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.19*

71. Mr. FERRARIN (Italy) introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/47/L.19*, on behalf of the countries whose names appeared on the document, together with the Bahamas, Belarus, Croatia, Hungary, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

72. The Ministerial Meeting held at Versailles in November 1991 had led to an effective United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme which had promptly been adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 46/152. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.19* was designed to secure the achievements made: the intergovernmental Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had, at its very first meeting, reached a consensus on the various questions submitted to it and had been able to define a platform which would allow it to direct its future action. It was also designed, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/22, paragraph 2, and General Assembly resolution 46/152, to support the process of strengthening United Nations activities in respect of crime prevention. In his report (A/47/399, paras. 76-79), the Secretary-General drew attention to the urgent need to enhance the institutional capacity of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme. Paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the draft confirmed that need. As the draft resolution was basically a follow-up text, its sponsors hoped that it would be possible to adopt it by consensus.

The meeting rose at noon.